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Newsletter

JUN 20 1967

April 15, 1967

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 2

Faculty Luncheon

CUT FLOWERS AND ICE CUBES

Knowing where to get cut flowers and ice cubes for the Congressman's office are just a couple of the bits of "inside" information people find out when they take a Graduate School course taught by Jerome Eller, Administrative Assistant to Senator Eugene J. McCarthy.



Mr. Eller, speaking at our April faculty luncheon, shared with us some of the other pointers he dispenses to aspiring Congressional aids taking his course. He said that he divides his course, "Administrative Operations for Congressional Assistants," into three parts, the first part dealing with "cut flowers and ice cubes" and other such items, stationery, stamps, salaries, etc.; the second dealing with plain writing--letters, press releases, and so on; and the third covering the rules of the House and Senate--and how laws really are made.

In general, Mr. Eller said, functional areas of work in a Congressional office can be subdivided into administrative, legislative, press relations, constituent relations, and political relations.

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HUMAN THINKING AND LEARNING

A series of seminars on Human Thinking and Learning under the sponsorship of the Graduate School is off to a flying start, with some 50 people taking part in the first two sessions.

Because this group is larger than we had originally planned on having, our steering committee has recommended subdividing it into three task groups (1) Changing Managerial Behavior--Chairman, Ben Edwards, Management Development, U. S. Department of Labor; (2) Changing the Change Agent in an Instructor-Learner Relationship--Chairman, James E. Conner, U. S. Office of Education; and (3) Changing Cultural Behavior--Chairman, Fred Frutchey, Federal Extension Service, USDA.

The first session featured a talk by Dr. James McPherson, Head of the Demonstration Center, Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and a member of our Social Sciences faculty, and the new Chairman of the Committee on Academic Excellence. He discussed "Factors Relating to the Problems of Changing Human Behavior."

He examined three dimensions of the problem: the nature of the mental processes involved in human thinking and learning; methods and specific operations and experiences required for bringing about changes in behavior; and ethical problems involved in exercising the increasing knowledge man is accumulating concerning ways of influencing behavior.

In regard to the latter, Dr. McPherson pointed out that knowledge we are acquiring in methods of changing human behavior holds promise of being able to reduce juvenile delinquency and anti-social behavior through processes that may be somewhat akin to brainwashing which can literally seal off certain kinds of behavior. It also holds promise of being able to help with many forms of mental illness. But it also holds the possibility that, if it is used in the wrong way, whole populations and peoples can be exploited and even destroyed.

The second session featured a film strip on Adult Learning prepared by J. W. Getzels, University of Chicago. In the filmstrip, conditions that make adult learning different from child learning are pointed out as:

1. Frequently there is no one correct answer.
2. Adults are bound by stereotypes and internal extremes of ethics and dogma.
3. The adult relates his learning to his wife, friend, boss, and child.
4. He refines and rearranges facts and observations in the light of his ethics.

In a task group session on "Changing the Change Agent," Mr. Conner said that this calls for an understanding of how change takes place in ourselves as well as other people. Summarizing theories on this subject, he offered these points:

1. Individuals "accept" and learn what is consistent with their image of self.
2. Operationally speaking, we are who we think we are. Our behavior is "designed" to prove the correctness of our self-concept.
3. If you wish to change a person, change his feelings about himself.
4. Perception is "inside out"--individuals differ in their openness to experience--in how much they will allow to pass their "screen." What is selected or rejected is controlled by the self-concept or self-image of the individual.
5. Threat limits what we are able to perceive.
6. Individuals will reject values which they view as "not-self."
7. Knowledge which is incompatible with self will be rejected.

Additional seminars are to be held in the luncheon conference room of the South Agriculture Building on May 26, May 31, and June 2.

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NEW PROFESSIONAL SEMINARS

A flyer issued recently describes 10 new week-day seminars designed especially to deal with the problems of highly-qualified professionals in the fields of management, personnel, economics, information, and employee development.

Since these seminars are limited to 18 participants, in each, those who are interested would be well advised to get their nominations in early. For further information, and a descriptive bulletin, call or write, W. H. Sears, Jr., Special Programs Department, USDA Graduate School, 277 National Press Building, 529 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20004. Telephone DU8-3247 or Code 111 extension 3247.

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CRITICAL ISSUES AND DECISIONS

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the upcoming series of "Critical Issues and Decisions" lectures. They'll be held from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Thomas Jefferson Auditorium, USDA South Building. We'll have some outstanding speakers including, Max Kaplan who will discuss "Leisure in a Working Society" on Thursday, April 20; S. Venkitaraman, of India, who will talk on "Public Administration in a Developing Society" on Monday, April 24; Leon Keyserling who will discuss "Next Steps in the New Economics" on Thursday, April 27; Whitney Young who will talk on "Freedom and Civil Rights" on Monday, May 1; and Max Lerner who perhaps will answer the question "Is American Civilization the Good Society?" on Thursday, May 11.

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FACULTY NOTES

Kenneth E. Ogren, who has been Director of the Marketing Economics Division, Economic Research Service, USDA, and Chairman of our Social Science Committee, as well as the teacher of our social sciences research seminar, has accepted a new position as agricultural attache in the U. S. Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris.

He writes that he leaves his association with the Graduate School with regret--but hopes to resume it when he is again on U. S. soil. He adds, "Maybe I'll enroll in a correspondence course now."

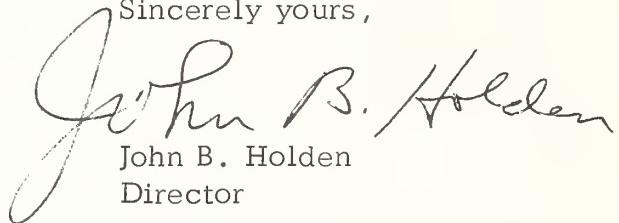
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Foster Mohrhardt, Director of the National Agricultural Library, and also the Graduate School's Librarian and First Vice President-President Elect of the American Library Association, will be receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Kalamazoo College on April 20.

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William E. Kibler, of the USDA Statistical Reporting Service, and the teacher of a Graduate School course in statistics, has been awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for a year's study at Princeton University.

Sincerely yours,


John B. Holden
Director